Employee's Attractiveness in A Change Phenomenon

Khaoula Naja, *(PhD, Student)*
Laboratory of Research in Strategy and Management of Organizations
National School of Commerce and Management of Settat
Hassan 1st University of Settat, Morocco

Amina Asli, *(PhD, Professor)*
Laboratory of Research in Strategy and Management of Organizations
National School of Commerce and Management of Settat
Hassan 1st University of Settat, Morocco

Correspondence address:	ENCG Settat Km 3, route de Casa BP 658, Settat Hassan 1st University Morocco (Settat) 26000 0611393773 najakhaoula.1@gmail.com
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Abstract

Every day, changes come to meet human's daily life. This is basically related to the technological domination that has been changing individuals' behavior.

Considering the human resources being the core capital of the company, the latter is automatically and directly affected by this change phenomenon; especially in attracting talented employees which is the first step of the recruitment process.

In front of this situation, the company is facing the challenge of proving its agility and providing solutions, especially that the job market is nowadays marked by the increasing talent war and the extensive complexity. The company needs to go with the flow and to surf on the wave of the change, in order to keep its place in the market or even to create a competitive edge.

In this article we will be studying the characteristics that define the 45-65's and the Y generations behavior. Through this study we will find out the new elements that attract the new generation (generation Y), to finally illustrate how can the employer (company) bend the new situation to his advantage and develop a new attractiveness strategy using the Y generation tools.

The study is first based on a deep review and analysis of literature. Then, a qualitative ethnographic case study bringing out contextual real-world knowledge about the behaviors, social structures and shared beliefs of a generation Y belonging to the call center industry.

1. Introduction

The importance of the company's agility is crystal clear, especially in an era where the change may present a risk. We talk about agility and not agitation. The company must have the ability to finely analyze its environment, perceive weak signals of future threats or new opportunities, and design appropriate responses.

Taking into consideration that competence is now recognized as an essential factor for success, companies strive to have the best human resources among those present on the job market or those in employment. For that the company needs to improve its attractiveness to both attract and retain

In our case, the challenge is to attract and retain employees belonging to a generation that is categorically different from its precedent and that emerges the job market day after day. We are then talking about proposing an interesting package that meets the expectation of the Gen Y employees.

As a first step, we decided to explore and understand the aspirations of the Generation Y, through a qualitative case study of employees belonging to a call center. Once we analyze the behaviors, social structures and shared beliefs of the Gen Y employees, we will present a list with the most requested aspects by the Gen Y employees in the company.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definitions and concepts

2.1.1 Human Capital

Henry Ford (1863 - 1947) stated, "The two most important things do not appear on the company's balance-sheet : its reputation and its men "

Indeed, today the human factor appears as a way for companies to increase their competitiveness. However, SMEs (Small and Medium-sized enterprises) often focused on day-to-day and concrete problems, are sometimes less sensitive to the link between skills enhancement and competitiveness.

The concept of Human Capital emerged in the 1960s, and the economist Gary Becker 1930 - 2014 (Nobel Prize in Economics in 1992) popularized this notion. Human Capital refers to all the talents, skills and experiences of an individual that will enable him to work for himself and for others. The interest of this notion is to define the capabilities of an individual as a capital, which means that it can be "investment" to increase its capabilities.

The notion of "capital" expresses the idea that it is an immaterial stock imputed to an individual, able to be accumulated.

Therefore, the human capital of an individual is defined above all, by the knowledge and skills that the latter masters. This knowledge and skills accumulated throughout the schooling, during the various training courses followed and during the experiences (Fuente and Ciccone, 2002). Three essential components can be distinguished (Fuente and Ciccone, 2002): general skills (literacy, numeracy, learning abilities), specific skills related to technologies or production processes (computer programming, maintenance and repair of mechanical parts) and technical and scientific skills (mastery of organized masses of knowledge and specific analytical techniques).

In the company, the human capital weaves fruitful links as much with the organizational capital (collective skills, organizational routines, corporate culture) as with the relational capital (Burlaud, 2000). This representation is also close to that proposed by Edvinson and Malone (1997) articulating the concepts of structural capital, customer capital and human capital.

Based on these several definitions and concepts of the Human Capital, it is crystal clear that the latter has a huge impact on the productivity of the company, and presents a real wealth for

the employer. It is a resource to be studied and treated carefully, especially in an era known for the talent war. Working on the attractiveness of the employees is nowadays a case to be considered in all day-to-day company operations.

2.1.2 Employees attractiveness concepts

Research on organizational choice and the premises of organizational attractiveness as an employer basically focus on instrumental and symbolic attributes and interactionist perspective, which refers to organizational attractiveness as a fit between person characteristics and characteristics of the job/organization (e.g. Lievens & Highouse, 2003; Lievens et al., 2005; Lievens et al., 2007; etc.).

This stream is based on the concept of corporate personality, where organizations are regarded like people and attributed human characteristics and different personality traits (Berens & Riel, 2004).

It is necessary to mention that personality trait-based inferences have predominantly shown out to be more important organization's attractiveness factor and differentiator than specific job/organization characteristics.

According to Jiang and Iles (2011), organizational attractiveness is a two-dimensional construct, where internal attractiveness expresses perceptions of existing employees and external attractiveness represents perceptions of external applicants.

Organization's attractiveness as an employer was repeatedly measured in employer branding context and concept. Berthon et al. (2005) have extended three-dimensional employer brand structure proposed by Ambler and Barrow (1996) to a five-factor scale for measurement of employer attractiveness (EmpAt) from potential applicants' perspective, comprising Interest value, Social value, Economic value, Development value and Application value. Although the scale demonstrated appropriate reliability (0.96), it was not widely used (Sivertzen et al., 2013), but contributed more as a theoretical model of dimensionality of employer's attractiveness.

EmpAt was explored and elaborated by Pingle and Sodhi (2011) who have developed and applied an eleven-factor instrument in Western India case. Authors have aggregated eleven dimensions into three-dimensional construct of (1) Psychological benefits, capturing Relationship, Recognition, Interest/Fun Value, Existing personal contacts, and Altruistic value; (2) Functional dimension encompassing Application value, Learning and Development value, Global opportunities, Local advantage; and (3) Economic dimension (Pingle & Sodhi, 2011). It was noticed that potential employees put most importance on economic value, existing personal contacts, global opportunities and CSR, while current employees appreciate relationships with colleagues, recognition and altruistic value.

The Great Place to Work Institute is the most famous worldwide research and assessment of an attractive workplace, as well as the election of the best ones, which is performed using the Great Place to Work survey tool Trust Index. This tool has been used to evaluate employers since 1980, concluding that trust, pride and joy make a workplace great. Other most popular instruments applicable to measuring the construct or just some facets of organizational attractiveness include Reputation Quotient (Fombrun et al., 2000), Corporate Personality Scale (Davies et al., 2001), Corporate Credibility Scale (Newell & Goldsmith, 2001), and numerous job satisfaction surveys. To see a whole but not yet final scale of this phenomenon, the data by the Reputation Institute (2013) shows that best employers, top brands, most admired, socially responsible companies and corporate reputations have been assessed in more than 100 lists published by magazines and newspapers around the world up to date.

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2.2 Main changes in the job market

2.2.1 45-65's generation

Most resources name individuals born from 1954 to 195 baby-boomers. It is a generation with specific characteristics that have been developed in the individuals of this generation.

According to a survey conducted by QAPA, for the baby boomer generation, the professional career is the most important for 39% of respondents (12 765 respondents), just ahead of the salary at 29%. They are employees that do not give importance to the quality of relationships with the colleagues, nor for the projects they may work for. These individuals are workaholic and are ready to work more than 45 hours per week. This implies the fact that this generation is the most engaged in their positions and feel concerned by the company or client they work for.

The baby-boomers do not care about their future; they have a complete trust on the employer and are tending to work for the same company as much as possible and develop a strong feeling of belonging to the company. In parallel, the employees belonging to the 45-65' generation express a respect for the authority and the hierarchical structure.

The baby-boomers have their life concentrated on work and they also link the social valorization to the career

2.2.2 The arrival of the generation Y

Companies are nowadays facing a new challenge: attracting the young of the generation Y. In fact, their expectations toward the companies and their behaviors are so different from those of the previous generation (born from 1945 to 1965). They actually are individuals born from 1970 to the middle of 1990.

Generation Y is made up of individualistic, inventive and impatient people. They are connected to the environment and organized into networks. They are optimistic, independent, goal-oriented and masters of the Internet and IT. They also want to work less and better. These young people think in the short term and are open-minded and mobile. It is a generation of zappers. They change their business easily if the conditions no longer suit them, their relationship to the hierarchy is no longer represented by a vertical organization but a horizontal organization in which they want to understand what they do with rights and not duties vis-à-vis the company.

2.2.3 Evolution of employees' expectations

The expectations of candidates and employees have gradually evolved to radically change in the recent years. As Peter Cappelli points out, we are indeed from a "job for life" model for which attachment to the employer was great, to nomadism characterized by a culture of "professional zapping ". The model had a first fracture in the seventies and then "literally" exploded in the nineties. Inevitably, this rupture has challenged a number of HR principles, models and processes: compensation systems, development of skills, work / life balance, …

Table1: Evolution of employees' expectations according

	Traditional expectations	45-65' generation expectations	Current expectations
Model	Employment for life	End of employment for life	Nomadism
Vision	Long term	Short term	Very short term

Employment	Employment security	Attractiveness in the job market	Professional zapping
Skills development	Training	Exchange of skills for training and experiences acquisition	The employee takes over his employability
Career progress	Linear	Transition phases	Chaotic
Remuneration	Guarantee	Compensation systems to the variable guaranteeing achieving results at short term	Very creative compensation package, often individualized, based on the performance at very short term
Relationship with the employer	Loyalty	Progressive mistrust toward the employer	Total mistrust toward the employer
Out of work	Hobbies	Personal life / Professional life balance	Work environment

Source: *Peter Cappelli (1999)*

From this comparison, we can affirm that mistrust towards employers and the short-term approach to employment encourage people to manage their career paths. The disappearance of the "reciprocal loyalty contract" and lasting psychological commitment, tacitly existing in the past between employers and employees, incite individuals to marry nomadic and discontinuous careers. The psychological contract is respect for mutual promises between stakeholders. With increasing inconsistencies between commitments and achievements, voluntary or sustained mobility has become inseparable from the notion of career. The attributes of the offer employment guidelines that guide the selection of candidates have also changed.

3. Case study: generation y in the industry of call center

Through these different elements, based on previous research, we have put the attention back on the importance of human capital within the company and have demonstrated the link between this importance and the need for the company to adapt to the expectations of all generations, mainly generation Y, which is the subject of our research, in order to be able to recruit and retain high-quality profiles.

This being said, before starting the empirical part, we present below our research hypotheses:

H1: Generation Y employees and future employees require special attention when studying their attractiveness

H2: The expectations of generation Y candidates go beyond the classic remuneration package and are more in search of other social / psychological benefits

H3: The technological and communication skills attributed to Gen Y make the comparison between different employers and the exchange with other candidates / employees too high.

The contribution of this work resides in the presentation of an attractive package for a candidate/collaborator of the generation Y

3.1 Methodology:

To get closer to Generation Y, understand their ways of thinking and their expectations from the employers, we went through an ethnographic qualitative case study of a sample belonging to the call center industry. The choice of the industry falls to the high rate of employees from generation Y, but also to the high rate of turnover in this sector. Following the qualitative method, we adopted the semi-structured interview, in which we sought answers to the following questions-axes:

- Feelings of the employees belonging to the generation Y towards their work environment
- What is most important to them in the company
- When looking for a new opportunity, what are the elements they are looking for in a future employer, their expectation

This qualitative research approach is particularly relevant when it comes to discovering new knowledge and truths in an uninitiated context.

Our sample was composed of four groups of 10 individuals, 20 - 35 years old. Each group presents a function. The focus group lasts about 45 minutes to one hour.

Our objective is to understand the expectations of generation Y within the company, in order to help companies to improve their employer brand, to attract more candidates but specially to retain them.

3.2 Results of the study:

As mentioned before, we are aiming through this study to present an attractive package for a candidate/collaborator of the generation Y.

Based on the answers of the participants in the focus group, and after classing carefully all the verbatims, we concluded that the employees of generation Y, belonging to the industry of the call center are relating an attractive place to work to the following explained elements.

- Meaning in the work:

All generations want their work to make sense. On the other hand, it is certain that the generation Y is the one who seeks meaning in priority, in their profession, their actions, their tasks, etc. "What is the point of doing this task? This question that the digital native frequently asks his manager, is not a questioning of authority, but simply a call to understand the meaning and contribution to others, to the company, to the world.

Once the meaning is given and clear, "there you go!" Generation Y gets to work with heart and conviction. Employees of generation Y ask themselves frequently this question: "When I get up in the morning, do I want to go to work? And why? ". This question is fundamental and solicits the meaning that the employees give to their job and their actions. If the answer is 'no', maybe this is the moment to evolve in professional life.

- Teamwork:

Employees belonging to generation Y have an inclusive culture. They tend to create networks between ideas and people. They are applicants to work in a team because they have been integrated each time, in addition. They are also looking for social interactions through the team.

- Participative management:

It is important to generation Y employees to set up a participative management mode by asking the opinion of the collaborators via meetings but also the intranet and internal social networks. It is a generation whose members want to share their ideas, not to be isolated in their work, alone in their respective offices to achieve individual goals. The corporate spirit is paramount to them.

Thus, they expect their manager to encourage cooperation and mutual help : the challenge yes, but collective.

● Internal and international mobility / evolution

Stagnation at the same job is a concern highlighted by all the groups, with professional experience. They mentioned that they were "afraid" or "very afraid" to stagnate without prospects of evolution in their job

It translates into an appetite for mobility within the same company, but also internationally.

They want to develop their skills by multiplying their experiences in as many functions as possible. They understand that the time when the employee committed to a company that offered him a permanent job is over and they have decided to become the strategists of their professional lives. Offering them a career plan or simply a reinforcement of skills seduces them. An organization chart will not talk to the Y generation, it must be translated in terms of skills, evolution, knowledge sharing.

● Quality of relationship and work environment:

Being good with the colleagues, getting along well with the manager, contributes to the quality of relationships. As they are relationship beings, they cannot be happy, alone in their corner. Happiness is only shared with others. The quality of relationships with colleagues is necessary to create the conditions of good understanding to reach the development. The generation Y searches for a building of authentic relations and trust. Moreover, a good working atmosphere often comes before the remuneration, as a criterion of choice for the digital native. The cultural impact of the company is that the young person is not engaged for the business, but for the people he works with. In summary: "Who first, then what?"

Also, for generation Y employees, stress and insecurity at a job have no beneficial impact on work and should be avoided. employees affirmed that feelings of insecurity in one's job have a negative impact on physical and mental health, increases risks burnout, lowers the level of satisfaction at work and lowers performance. If they are anxious or depressed, it will be difficult to be productive and creative.

● Personal life and professional life balance:

This expectation is essential for digital natives. These young people have seen their parents exhaust themselves to the task and do not want to reproduce this pattern. The professional career remains important but is no longer a priority as it was sometimes for a baby boomer (born between 1945 and 1965). At present the work must serve the overall balance of young Y. It must be a determining factor of personal fulfillment. It is necessary that the employee can develop, not only in terms of his skills, but also in terms of his behavior, his values and his identity. Moreover, when you ask a Gen Y worker what he is looking for, he often answers "a job that interests me". If the job is exciting, the employee will invest and produce high quality work if the skills follow. As it is well known, the pleasure behind passion is an essential motivation driver.

● Honest communication and immediate feedback:

The communication tools of the employees of generation Y made them used to exchange on an equal basis by giving their opinion. They express clearly what they think, even to a line manager. In return, they wait for his opinion to feed the discussion and feel recognized. Their need for recognition is very strong. They experienced an education where they were asked their opinion, where they were encouraged to express their desires. Previous generations had deference to the corporate world, unlike Generation Y, which needs to be further explained, answered (their questions are direct and sometimes destabilizing).

Generation Y is the one that uses the newest technologies and social networks. Its members are in continuous and immediate interaction with each other. Thus, the digital native expects this exchange when he arrives in the professional world. And in particular with his linear manager, with whom he hopes for an honest relationship and immediate feedback on his

performance and skills. Because it is natural for him to give feedback to the other, to express his opinion, to show his agreement or disagreement. The most direct impact is for managers who have to start giving personalized feedback to their team members. It has to be formal and informal, because Generation Y likes direct and straightforward communication. Based on the feedback, the employee can adjust and progress. If there is no feedback, it can lead to frustration and unspoken "What does he think about my job? Is it adjusted? "

3.3 Discussion

After a deep analysis of our survey results, we could detect the attracting elements of the individuals of the Gen Y.

It is evidence that these digital natives are very connected and organized in networks. The company must penetrate this network and assure a strong presence to face the concurrent. The more they feel the company near to them, the more they feel comfortable about it, as an employer able to understand their expectations.

The company needs to communicate about its internal environment, the ambience, the values and the vision via the means used by the individuals of Gen Y. These shared elements must be real and reflect the daily reality of the company, otherwise we will be in a case of misleading communication, which is worse than not communicating at all.

For that, the company must first work internally and launch an in-house development of its package.

The change project must include all the elements that seem important to the Gen Y, or at least the main ones. We are talking here about the axes related to the work life and ambience, the professional / personal life balance and the career evolution.

From the other hand, a company must always return to the fact that its current employees are its main ambassadors. They have a huge impact on potential candidates/employees. They are actually the canal reporting what truly happens inside the company to the people outside the company. This implies, we are not anymore in an era of attracting employees and having them surprised by the reality of the company. In such a situation, individuals of Gen Y will quickly leave to look for the environment that suits them the most, as they are known by the professional zapping. Hence the coherence between internal and external attractiveness vision.

To sum up, the employer would better quickly seize the 2.0 opportunities. A state of mind close to the ambient culture: sharing has to be at the center of the organization. Everyone and whatever his level in the hierarchy, shares the information he collects. The new tools facilitate this transmission, and the favorite for our generation Y.

Based on the research results the required changes should be focused on these areas :

- Using information and communication technologies in recruitment, with a focus on social networking through networks Linkedin, Viadeo, Xing, Google+. Sometimes Facebook and Instagram give their fruit.
- Using of information and communication technologies for adaptation process, to allocate the position of "leader - senior- mentor" to be helpful new employees,
- Improving internal communications and providing regular feedback,
- Preference for the leadership way in the form of "coaching - mentoring"
- Enhancing the possibilities of internal and international mobilities.

The discussion of the results of our study shows that our hypotheses are all confirmed (H1, H2 and H3), in the sense that the recruitment of Generation Y candidates/employees require specific attention. That is due to the change of their professional expectations in comparison to previous generations. In fact, their focus is on social, psychological, and intellectual benefits more than on classic compensation package. The company also needs to follow the high communicational and technological rhythm to be able to infiltrate into the world of the Gen Y,

as they possess important communication skills and technological/ social networks that allow them easily to compare between employees

In the following section, we will develop some recommendations in relation to these results.

4. Conclusion

Attraction and retention are at the top of the list of challenges facing HR departments. They are challenged to develop their organization's employer brand to overcome the lack of skilled labor. Our objective was to identify an attractive compensation package for Generation Y that will allow the company to develop its employer brand. In fact, a strong employer brand will allow the candidate, once in the job, to realize that the promises received during the recruitment communication have been respected (Berthon, Ewing and Hah, 2005) and will certainly minimize the risks of departure during the integration period.

However, the attraction-retention effect will only be fully effective if the organization ensures a double compatibility: person/organization and person/job (Chapman et al, 2005) and if it manages its total compensation package in a global and integrated way (St Onge et al, 2009).

Our study naturally has some limitations. First, the results were limited to a segment of Generation Y situated in the call center industry and therefore cannot be generalized. Secondly, our study was intended to be more exploratory; a subsequent analysis based on the study of the ratio of retained employees / attracted employees is essential in order to measure in greater depth the commitment of companies in respecting the promises made during the recruitment of generation Y.

In terms of further avenues of research, it is important to consider that while attracting and recruiting the best talent, the employer should start studying from now the specifications of the next generation: the generation Z. The future employees belonging to this generation seem to be very demanding and exacting toward the employer.

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